AI Overview

For USDA Zone 6, the best apricots to grow are varieties known for being cold-hardy and for blooming later in the spring to avoid late frosts. Some top recommendations include 'Harcot,' 'Goldcot,' and 'Hargrand'.

Top recommended apricot varieties for Zone 6

- **'Harcot':** This is one of the most reliable options for Zone 6.
  - **Cold tolerance:** Excellent, with frost-hardy, late-blooming flowers that help avoid damage from unpredictable spring frosts.
  - **Fruit:** Medium-sized with a sweet, rich, and juicy flavor.
  - **Disease resistance:** Good resistance to common diseases like brown rot and canker.
- **'Goldcot':** A very cold-hardy and reliable producer.
  - **Cold tolerance:** Tolerates temperatures down to -30°F, making it one of the most cold-hardy apricots available.
  - **Fruit:** Medium to large golden-yellow fruit with a tangy and sweet flavor.
  - **Ripening:** Matures in the summer through fall.
- **'Hargrand':** A disease-resistant apricot ideal for home gardens.
  - **Cold tolerance:** Suited for USDA Zones 4–8.
  - **Fruit:** Large, juicy, and aromatic golden-orange fruits with sweet flesh.
  - **Pollination:** Self-fertile, meaning you don't need a second tree for pollination.
- **'Tomcot':** An excellent early-ripening option with good frost resistance.
  - **Cold tolerance:** Known for its remarkable frost resistance, which protects early blooms.
  - **Fruit:** Exceptionally sweet and flavorful, ripening in late spring to early summer.
- **'Moorpark':** A classic, well-regarded heirloom variety that can work in Zone 6.
  - **Note:** While it can survive in Zone 6, its tendency to bloom early makes it more susceptible to late frosts. Gardeners in Zone 6 should choose a protected spot for this tree.

    - **Fruit:** Exceptionally rich flavor and aroma, with fruit ripening over a long period.
- **'Blenheim' (Royal):** This variety is known for its rich flavor and consistent production in certain areas.
    - **Note:** Similar to 'Moorpark,' this variety has a history of inconsistent performance due to early blooming, but can be a good choice if local growers have had success.
    - **Fruit:** Medium-sized with orange skin and yellow flesh.

Tips for growing apricots in Zone 6

- **Site selection:** Choose a location that offers protection from spring frosts and high winds. Planting on higher ground can help cold air drain away from the trees.
- **Pollination:** While many apricot trees are self-fertile, planting a second variety can increase pollination and result in a larger, higher-quality harvest.
- **Soil and sun:** Apricots thrive in full sun (6 to 8 hours daily) and well-drained soil. Avoid heavy or "wet feet" soil conditions.
- **Late pruning:** In Zone 6 and colder climates, prune your apricot tree in late winter while it is dormant. This helps shape the tree and promote fruiting.